No. 28. PRICE SIXPENCE JUNE 8.

The Last Chronicle of Barset

BY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

With Illustrations by G. H. Thomas

SMITH, ELDER, & Co.

65. CORNHILL.

E.C

[The right of Translation is reserved.]

Just Published, 2 vols. demy 8vo. 26*s*.

THE CLAVERINGS.

By ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

WITH SIXTEEN FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS.

"The art of 'The Claverings' strikes us as of a very high class. There are far fewer unconnected side-pictures than is usual in Mr. Trollope's novels. Indeed, almost every side-picture is calculated to heighten the effect of the principal subject of the story. . . . . There is a moral, and, as we take it, a very high, and in these present days a very rare moral, in Mr. Trollope's tale, which strikes us as one of the healthiest, and, without soaring very high, one of the noblest for ordinary men which has been written for many a day. . . . . 'The Claverings' has, as we believe, a higher moral and a more perfect artistic unity than any of Mr. Trollope's previous tales. There is scarcely a touch in it which does not contribute to the main effect, both artistic and moral, of the story, and not a character introduced, however slightly sketched, which does not produce its own unique and specific effect on the reader's imagination." —*Spectator.*

LONDON: SMITH, ELDER AND CO., 65, CORNHILL.

Just Published, 2 vols. post 8vo.

MR. WYNYARD'S WARD.

By HOLME LEE,

Author of "Sylvan Holt's Daughter," &c.

"Foremost amongst the qualities which make up the goodness of this clever and charming tale are a freshness of style and a peculiar newness of arrangement and manipulation which affect the reader with a pleasure closely similar to that which follows from the perusal of an author of novel aims and altogether distinctive thought. . . . No purer, brighter, or more delightful tale has for many a day come under our notice."—*Athenæum.*

"A very attractive and touching story. . . . The heroine's character is charming, very true and life-like, and marked by a number of those agreeable little peculiarities which give a pleasing individuality to a fictitious personage. . . . . Many a tired reader of contemporary fiction will find an agreeable change offered him in 'Mr. Wynyard's Ward.'" —*London Review.*

LONDON: SMITH, ELDER AND CO., 65, CORNHILL.

ILLUSTRATED SERIES OF

STANDARD WORKS OF FICTION.

WELL PRINTED, ON GOOD PAPER, AND TASTEFULLY BOUND,

One Shilling each Volume.

1 **Confidences.** By the Author of "Carr of Carrlyon," "Mr. and Mrs. Faulconbridge," &c.

2 **Erlesmere; or, Contrasts of Character.** By L. S. Lavenu.

3 **Nanette and her Lovers.** By Talbot Gwynne.

4 **Life and Death of Silas Barnstarke.** By Talbot Gwynne.

5 **Rose Douglas; the Autobiography of a Scotch** Minister's Daughter.

6 **Tender and True.** By the Author of "Clara Morison."

7 **Gilbert Massenger.** By Holme Lee.

8 **Thorney Hall; a Story of an Old Family.** By Holme Lee.

9 **My Lady; a Tale of Modern Life.**

10 **The Cruelest Wrong of All.** By the Author of "Darkest before Dawn."

11 **Lost and Won.** By Georgiana M. Craik.

12 **Hawksview: a Family History of our own Times.** By Holme Lee.

13 **Cousin Stella; or, Conflict.** By the Author of "Once and Again," &c.

14 **Florence Templar.** By Mrs. F. Vidal.

15 **Highland Lasses; or, The Roua Pass.** By Erick Mackenzie.

16 **Wheat and Tares; a Modern Story.**

17 **Amberhill: or, Guilty Peace.** By A. J. Barrowcliffe.

18 **Young Singleton.** By Talbot Gwynne.

19 **A Lost Love.** By Ashford Owen.

20 **My First Season.** By the Author of "Charles Auchester."

21 **The White House by the Sea; a Love Story.** By M. Betham-Edwards.

22 **The Eve of St. Mark; a Romance of Venice.** By Thomas Doubleday.

Standard Works of Fiction—*continued.*

23 **Arrows in the Dark.** By the Author of "Said and Done."

24 **Adrian L'Estrange; or, Moulded out of Faults.**

25 **The Cotton Lord.** By H. Glyn.

26 **A Simple Woman.** By the Author of "Nut-Brown Maids," &c.

27 **Skirmishing.** By the Author of "Cousin Stella," "Once and Again," &c.

28 **Farina: a Legend of Cologne.** By George Meredith.

29 **Normanton.** By the Author of "Amberhill; or, Guilty Peace."

30 **Winifred's Wooing.** By Georgiana M. Craik.

31 **The School for Fathers. An Old English Story.** By Talbot Gwynne.

32 **Lena; or, The Silent Woman.** By the Author of "Beyminstre."

33 **Paul Ferroll.** By the Author of "IX. Poems by V."

34 **Entanglements.** By the Author of "Mr. Arle," "Caste," &c.

35 **Beyminstre.** By the Author of "Lena; or, The Silent Woman."

36 **Counterparts; or, The Cross of Love.** By the Author of "Charles Auchester," &c.

37 **Leonora; or, Fair and False.** By the Hon. Mrs. Maberly.

38 **Extremes.** By Emma Willsher Atkinson.

39 **An Old Debt.**

40 **Uncle Crotty's Relations.** By Herbert Glyn.

41 **Grey's Court.** Edited by Lady Chatterton.

42 **A Bad Beginning.** By Mrs. Macquoid.

43 **Heiress of the Blackburnfoot. A Tale of Rural Scottish Life.** By the Author of "A Life's Love."

44 **Over the Cliffs.** By Mrs. Chanter, Author of "Ferny Combes."

*** The above Editions are also issued handsomely bound in cloth, gilt lettered, at Sixpence per Volume extra.

London: Smith, Elder and Co., 65, Cornhill.

JUST READY, NEW AND CHEAPER EDITION,
Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. With Four Illustrations.

THE

STORY OF ELIZABETH.

(BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.)

"A story unique among the novels of the day; a fresh bouquet all dewed and thorned with real prickle upon the rose-stalks, and great blobs of morning tears upon the leaves. . . . . But if there are thorns there is fragrance, and promise not to be mistaken; and so vivid a picture of a girl's heart, made by the fittest of all painters, an artist on the spot and behind the scenes, has an interest still greater than that of a story to all who may be concerned in the caprices or peculiarities of that generally interesting species of humanity."

(FRASER'S MAGAZINE.)

"'The Story of Elizabeth' affords an almost solitary instance of a simple, touching, life-like tale, which possesses interest without any physical horrors, and amusement without the aid of melo-drama. . . . . Take it all in all, 'Elizabeth' is the lightest, brightest, cleverest little book that has been published for a long time."

(SPECTATOR.)

"The English, no less than the substance of this little tale, indicates real genius. It is not only fresh and bright, but, what is not common in combination with a fresh, sparkling style, it is rich and mellow, and reminds us of Mr. Tennyson's happy description of the old vintage. It is rare, indeed, to find a style which is steeped in the colours of many literary generations, and yet so full of vivacity and youth as this."

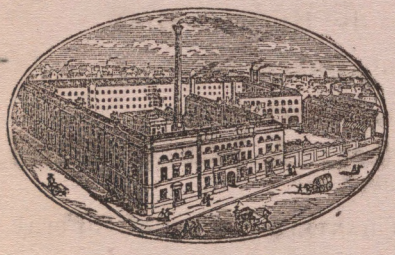
LONDON: SMITH, ELDER AND CO., 65, CORNHILL.

BY ROYAL COMMAND
METALLIC PEN MAKER TO THE QUEEN.

JOSEPH GILLOTT

Respectfully directs the attention of the Commercial Public, and of all who use Steel Pens, to the incomparable excellence of his productions, which for QUALITY OF MATERIAL, EASY ACTION, and GREAT DURABILITY, will ensure universal preference.

EVERY PACKET BEARS THE FAC-SIMILE OF HIS SIGNATURE



VICTORIA WORKS, BIRMINGHAM.

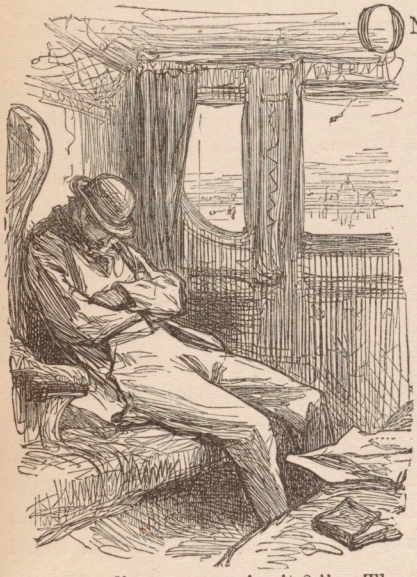
They can be obtained, retail, of every dealer in the world; wholesale at the Works, Graham Street, Birmingham; and at the Branch Establishments, 91, John Street, New York; and 37, Gracechurch Street, London.

EXCELLENT SHERRY, 21*s.* per dozen, clean, nutty, and dry, imported direct from Xeres, by JOHN RICHARD WACE and Co., Wine Merchants, &c., 45 and 46, Baker Street, Portman Square, W. Forwarded carriage free on the receipt of a post-office order or reference.

"No sale after all?"

CHAPTER LXX.

MRS. ARABIN IS CAUGHT.



ONE morning about the middle of April Mr. Toogood received a telegram from Venice which caused him instantly to leave his business in Bedford Row and take the first train for Silverbridge. "It seems to me that this job will be a deal of time and very little money," said his partner to him, when Toogood on the spur of the moment was making arrangements for his sudden departure and uncertain period of absence. "That's about it," said Toogood. "A deal of time, some expense, and no returns. It's not the kind of business a man can live upon; is it?" The partner growled, and Toogood went. But as we must go with Mr. Toogood down to Silverbridge, and as we cannot make the journey in this chapter, we will just indicate his departure and then go back to John Eames, who, as will be remembered, was just starting for Florence when we last saw him.

Our dear old friend Johnny had been rather proud of himself as he started from London. He had gotten an absolute victory over Sir Raffle Buffle, and that alone was gratifying to his feelings. He liked the excitement of a journey, and especially of a journey to Italy; and the importance of the cause of his journey was satisfactory to him. But above all things he was delighted at having found that Lily Dale was pleased at his going. He had seen clearly that she was much pleased, and that she made something of a hero of him because of his alacrity in the cause of his cousin. He had partially understood,—had understood in a dim sort of way,—that his want of favour in Lily's eyes had come from some deficiency of his own in this respect. She had not found him to be a

hero. She had known him first as a boy, with boyish belongings around him, and she had seen him from time to time as he became a man, almost with too much intimacy for the creation of that love with which he wished to fill her heart. His rival had come before her eyes for the first time with all the glories of Pall Mall heroism about him, and Lily in her weakness had been conquered by them. Since that she had learned how weak she had been,—how silly, how childish, she would say to herself when she allowed her memory to go back to the details of her own story; but not the less on that account did she feel the want of something heroic in a man before she could teach herself to look upon him as more worthy of her regard than other men. She had still unconsciously hoped in regard to Crosbie, but now that hope had been dispelled as unconsciously, simply by his appearance. There had been moments in which John Eames had almost risen to the necessary point,—had almost made good his footing on the top of some moderate, but still sufficient mountain. But there had still been a succession of little tumbles,—unfortunate slips for which he himself should not always have been held responsible; and he had never quite stood upright on his pinnacle, visible to Lily's eyes as being really excelsior. Of all this John Eames himself had an inkling which had often made him very uncomfortable. What the mischief was it she wanted of him; and what was he to do? The days for plucking glory from the nettle danger were clean gone by. He was well dressed. He knew a good many of the right sort of people. He was not in debt. He had saved an old nobleman's life once upon a time, and had been a good deal talked about on that score. He had even thrashed the man who had ill-treated her. His constancy had been as the constancy of a Jacob! What was it that she wanted of him? But in a certain way he did know what was wanted; and now, as he started for Florence, intending to stop nowhere till he reached that city, he hoped that by this chivalrous journey he might even yet achieve the thing necessary.

But on reaching Paris he heard tidings of Mrs. Arabin which induced him to change his plans and make for Venice instead of for Florence. A banker at Paris, to whom he brought a letter, told him that Mrs. Arabin would now be found at Venice. This did not perplex him at all. It would have been delightful to see Florence,—but was more delightful still to see Venice. His journey was the same as far as Turin; but from Turin he proceeded through Milan to Venice, instead of going by Bologna to Florence. He had fortunately come armed with an Austrian passport,—as was necessary in those bygone days of Venetia's thraldom. He was almost proud of himself, as

though he had done something great, when he tumbled in to his inn at Venice, without having been in a bed since he left London.

But he was barely allowed to swim in a gondola, for on reaching Venice he found that Mrs. Arabin had gone back to Florence. He had been directed to the hotel which Mrs. Arabin had used, and was there told that she had started the day before. She had received some letter, from her husband as the landlord thought, and had done so. That was all the landlord knew. Johnny was vexed, but became a little prouder than before as he felt it to be his duty to go on to Florence before he went to bed. There would be another night in a railway carriage, but he would live through it. There was just time to have a tub and a breakfast, to swim in a gondola, to look at the outside of the Doge's palace, and to walk up and down the piazza before he started again. It was hard work, but I think he would have been pleased had he heard that Mrs. Arabin had retreated from Florence to Rome. Had such been the case, he would have folded his cloak around him, and have gone on,—regardless of brigands,—thinking of Lily, and wondering whether anybody else had ever done so much before without going to bed. As it was, he found that Mrs. Arabin was at the hotel in Florence,—still in bed, as he had arrived early in the morning. So he had another tub, another breakfast, and sent up his card. "Mr. John Eames,"—and across the top of it he wrote, "has come from England about Mr. Crawley." Then he threw himself on to a sofa in the hotel reading-room, and went fast to sleep.

John had found an opportunity of talking to a young lady in the breakfast-room, and had told her of his deeds. "I only left London on Tuesday night, and I have come here taking Venice on the road."

"Then you have travelled fast," said the young lady.

"I haven't seen a bed, of course," said John.

The young lady immediately afterwards told her father. "I suppose he must be one of those Foreign Office messengers," said the young lady.

"Anything but that," said the gentleman. "People never talk about their own trades. He's probably a clerk with a fortnight's leave of absence, seeing how many towns he can do in the time. It's the usual way of travelling now-a-days. When I was young and there were no railways, I remember going from Paris to Vienna without sleeping." Luckily for his present happiness, John did not hear this.

He was still fast asleep when a servant came to him from Mrs. Arabin to say that she would see him at once. "Yes, yes; I'm quite ready to go on," said Johnny, jumping up, and thinking of the journey

to Rome. But there was no journey to Rome before him. Mrs. Arabin was almost in the next room, and there he found her.

The reader will understand that they had never met before, and hitherto knew nothing of each other. Mrs. Arabin had never heard the name of John Eames till John's card was put into her hands, and would not have known his business with her had he not written those few words upon it. "You have come about Mr. Crawley?" she said to him, eagerly. "I have heard from my father that somebody was coming."

"Yes, Mrs. Arabin; as hard as I could travel. I had expected to find you at Venice."

"Have you been at Venice?"

"I have just arrived from Venice. They told me at Paris I should find you there. However, that does not matter, as I have found you here. I wonder whether you can help us?"

"Do you know Mr. Crawley? Are you a friend of his?"

"I never saw him in my life; but he married my cousin.'

"I gave him the cheque, you know," said Mrs. Arabin.

"What!" exclaimed Eames, literally almost knocked backwards by the easiness of the words which contained a solution for so terrible a difficulty. The Crawley case had assumed such magnitude, and the troubles of the Crawley family had been so terrible, that it seemed to him to be almost sacrilegious that words so simply uttered should suffice to cure everything. He had hardly hoped,—had at least barely hoped,—that Mrs. Arabin might be able to suggest something which would put them all on a track towards discovery of the truth. But he found that she had the clue in her hand, and that the clue was one which required no further delicacy of investigation. There would be nothing more to unravel; no journey to Jerusalem would be necessary!

"Yes," said Mrs. Arabin, "I gave it to him. They have been writing to my husband about it, and never wrote to me; and till I received a letter about it from my father, and another from my sister, at Venice the day before yesterday, I knew nothing of the particulars of Mr. Crawley's trouble."

"Had you not heard that he had been taken before the magistrates?"

"No; not so much even as that. I had seen in "Galignani" something about a clergyman, but I did not know what clergyman; and I heard that there was something wrong about Mr. Crawley's money, but there has always been something wrong about money with poor Mr. Crawley; and as I knew that my husband had been written to also, I did not interfere, further than to ask the particulars. My

letters have followed me about, and I only learned at Venice, just before I came here, what was the nature of the case."

"And did you do anything?"

"I telegraphed at once to Mr. Toogood, who I understand is acting as Mr. Crawley's solicitor. My sister sent me his address."

"He is my uncle."

"I telegraphed to him, telling him that I had given Mr. Crawley the cheque, and then I wrote to Archdeacon Grantly giving him the whole history. I was obliged to come here before I could return home, but I intended to start this evening."

"And what is the whole history?" asked John Eames.

The history of the gift of the cheque was very simple. It has been told how Mr. Crawley in his dire distress had called upon his old friend at the deanery asking for pecuniary assistance. This he had done with so much reluctance that his spirit had given way while he was waiting in the dean's library, and he had wished to depart without accepting what the dean was quite willing to bestow upon him. From this cause it had come to pass there had been no time for explanatory words, even between the dean and his wife,—from whose private funds had in truth come the money which had been given to Mr. Crawley. For the private wealth of the family belonged to Mrs. Arabin, and not to the dean; and was left entirely in Mrs. Arabin's hands, to be disposed of as she might please. Previously to Mr. Crawley's arrival at the deanery this matter had been discussed between the dean and his wife, and it had been agreed between them that a sum of fifty pounds should be given. It should be given by Mrs. Arabin, but it was thought that the gift would come with more comfort to the recipient from the hands of his old friend than from those of his wife. There had been much discussion between them as to the mode in which this might be done with least offence to the man's feelings,—for they knew Mr. Crawley and his peculiarities well. At last it was agreed that the notes should be put into an envelope, which envelope the dean should have ready with him. But when the moment came the dean did not have the envelope ready, and was obliged to leave the room to seek his wife. And Mrs. Arabin explained to John Eames that even she had not had it ready, and had been forced to go to her own desk to fetch it. Then, at the last moment, with the desire of increasing the good to be done to people who were so terribly in want, she put the cheque for twenty-pounds, which was in her possession as money of her own, along with the notes, and in this way the cheque had been given by the dean to Mr. Crawley. "I shall never forgive myself for not telling

the dean," she said. "Had I done that all this trouble would have been saved!"

"But where did you get the cheque?" Eames asked with natural curiosity.

"Exactly," said Mrs. Arabin. "I have got to show now that I did not steal it,—have I not? Mr. Soames will indict me now. And, indeed, I have had some trouble to refresh my memory as to all the particulars, for you see it is more than a year past." But Mrs. Arabin's mind was clearer on such matters than Mr. Crawley's, and she was able to explain that she had taken the cheque as part of the rent due to her from the landlord of "The Dragon of Wantly," which inn was her property, having been the property of her first husband. For some years past there had been a difficulty about the rent, things not having gone at "The Dragon of Wantly" as smoothly as they had used to go. At one time the money had been paid half-yearly by the landlord's cheque on the bank at Barchester. For the last year-and-a-half this had not been done, and the money had come into Mrs. Arabin's hands at irregular periods and in irregular sums. There was at this moment rent due for twelve months, and Mrs. Arabin expressed her doubt whether she would get it on her return to Barchester. On the occasion to which she was now alluding, the money had been paid into her own hands, in the deanery breakfast-parlour, by a man she knew very well, —not the landlord himself, but one bearing the landlord's name, whom she believed to be the landlord's brother, or at least his cousin. The man in question was named Daniel Stringer, and he had been employed in "The Dragon of Wantly," as a sort of clerk or managing man, as long as she had known it. The rent had been paid to her by Daniel Stringer quite as often as by Daniel's brother or cousin, John Stringer, who was, in truth, the landlord of the hotel. When questioned by John respecting the persons employed at the inn, she said that she did believe that there had been rumours of something wrong. The house had been in the hands of the Stringers for many years,—before the property had been purchased by her husband's father,—and therefore there had been an unwillingness to move them; but gradually, so she said, there had come upon her and her husband a feeling that the house must be put into other hands. "But did you say nothing about the cheque?" John asked. "Yes, I said a good deal about it. I asked why a cheque of Mr. Soames's was brought to me, instead of being taken to the bank for money; and Stringer explained to me that they were not very fond of going to the bank, as they owed money there, but that I could pay it into my account. Only I kept my account at the other bank.'

"You might have paid it in there?" said Johnny.

"I suppose I might, but I didn't. I gave it to poor Mr. Crawley instead,—like a fool, as I know now that I was. And so I have brought all this trouble on him and on her; and now I must rush home, without waiting for the dean, as fast as the trains will carry me."

Eames offered to accompany her, and this offer was accepted. "It is hard upon you, though," she said; "you will see nothing of Florence. Three hours in Venice, and six in Florence, and no hours at all anywhere else, will be a hard fate to you on your first trip to Italy." But Johnny said "Excelsior" to himself once more, and thought of Lily Dale, who was still in London, hoping that she might hear of his exertions; and he felt, perhaps, also, that it would be pleasant to return with a dean's wife, and never hesitated. Nor would it do, he thought, for him to be absent in the excitement caused by the news of Mr. Crawley's innocence and injuries. "I don't care a bit about that," he said. "Of course, I should like to see Florence, and, of course, I should like to go to bed; but I will live in hopes that I may do both some day." And so there grew to be a friendship between him and Mrs. Arabin even before they had started.

He was driven once through Florence; he saw the Venus de' Medici, and he saw the Seggiola; he looked up from the side of the Duomo to the top of the Campanile, and he walked round the back of the cathedral itself; he tried to inspect the doors of the Baptistery, and declared that the "David" was very fine. Then he went back to the hotel, dined with Mrs. Arabin, and started for England.

The dean was to have joined his wife at Venice, and then they were to have returned together, coming round by Florence. Mrs. Arabin had not, therefore, taken her things away from Florence when she left it, and had been obliged to return to pick them up on her journey homewards. He,—the dean,—had been delayed in his Eastern travels. Neither Syria nor Constantinople had got themselves done as quickly as he had expected, and he had, consequently, twice written to his wife, begging her to pardon the transgression of his absence for even yet a few days longer. "Everything, therefore," as Mrs. Arabin said, "has conspired to perpetuate this mystery, which a word from me would have solved. I owe more to Mr. Crawley than I can ever pay him."

"He will be very well paid, I think," said John, "when he hears the truth. If you could see inside his mind at this moment, I'm sure you'd find that he thinks he stole the cheque."

"He cannot think that, Mr. Eames. Besides, at this moment I hope he has heard the truth."

"That may be, but he did think so. I do believe that he had not the slightest notion where he got it; and, which is more, not a single person in the whole county had a notion. People thought that he had picked it up, and used it in his despair. And the bishop has been so hard upon him."

"Oh, Mr. Eames, that is the worst of all."

"So I am told. The bishop has a wife, I believe."

"Yes, he has a wife, certainly," said Mrs. Arabin.

"And people say that she is not very good-natured."

"There are some of us at Barchester who do not love her very dearly. I cannot say that she is one of my own especial friends."

"I believe she has been hard to Mr. Crawley," said John Eames.

"I should not be in the least surprised," said Mrs. Arabin.

Then they reached Turin, and there, taking up "Galignani's Messenger" in the reading-room of Trompetta's Hotel, John Eames saw that Mrs. Proudie was dead. "Look at that," said he, taking the paragraph to Mrs. Arabin; "Mrs. Proudie is dead!" "Mrs. Proudie dead!" she exclaimed. "Poor woman! Then there will be peace at Barchester!" "I never knew her very intimately," she afterwards said to her companion, "and I do not know that I have a right to say that she ever did me an injury. But I remember well her first coming into Barchester. My sister's father-in-law, the late bishop, was just dead. He was a mild, kind, dear old man, whom my father loved beyond all the world, except his own children. You may suppose we were all a little sad. I was not specially connected with the cathedral then, except through my father,"—and Mrs. Arabin, as she told all this, remembered that in the days of which she was speaking she was a young mourning widow,—"but I think I can never forget the sort of harsh-toned pæan of low-church trumpets with which that poor woman made her entry into the city. She might have been more lenient, as we had never sinned by being very high. She might, at any rate, have been more gentle with us at first. I think we had never attempted much beyond decency, good-will and comfort. Our comfort she utterly destroyed. Good-will was not to her taste. And as for decency, when I remember some things, I must say that when the comfort and good-will went, the decency went along with them. And now she is dead! I wonder how the bishop will get on without her."

"Like a house on fire, I should think," said Johnny.

"Fie, Mr. Eames; you shouldn't speak in such a way on such a subject."

Mrs. Arabin and Johnny became fast friends as they journeyed

home. There was a sweetness in his character which endeared him readily to women; though, as we have seen, there was a want of something to make one woman cling to him. He could be soft and pleasant-mannered. He was fond of making himself useful, and was a perfect master of all those little caressing modes of behaviour in which the caress is quite impalpable, and of which most women know the value and appreciate the comfort. By the time that they had reached Paris John had told Mrs. Arabin the whole story of Lily Dale and Crosbie, and Mrs. Arabin had promised to assist him, if any assistance might be in her power.

"Of course I have heard of Miss Dale," she said, "because we know the De Courcys." Then she turned away her face, almost blushing, as she remembered the first time that she had seen that Lady Alexandrina De Courcy whom Mr. Crosbie had married. It had been at Mr. Thorne's house at Ullathorne, and on that day she had done a thing which she had never since remembered without blushing. But it was an old story now, and a story of which her companion knew nothing,—of which he never could know anything. That day at Ullathorne Mrs. Arabin, the wife of the Dean of Barchester, than whom there was no more discreet clerical matron in the diocese, had ——boxed a clergyman's ears!

"Yes," said John, speaking of Crosbie, "he was a wise fellow; he knew what he was about; he married an earl's daughter."

"And now I remember hearing that somebody gave him a terrible beating. Perhaps it was you?"

"It wasn't terrible at all," said Johnny.

"Then it was you?"

"Oh, yes; it was I."

"Then it was you who saved poor old Lord De Guest from the bull?"

"Go on, Mrs. Arabin. There is no end of the grand things I've done."

"You're quite a hero of romance."

He bit his lip as he told himself that he was not enough of a hero. "I don't know about that," said Johnny. "I think what a man ought to do in these days is to seem not to care what he eats and drinks, and to have his linen very well got up. Then he'll be a hero." But that was hard upon Lily.

"Is that what Miss Dale requires?" said Mrs. Arabin.

"I was not thinking about her particularly," said Johnny, lying.

They slept a night in Paris, as they had done also at Turin,—Mrs.

Arabin not finding herself able to accomplish such marvels in the way of travelling as her companion had achieved—and then arrived in London in the evening. She was taken to a certain quiet clerical hotel at the top of Suffolk Street, much patronized by bishops and deans of the better sort, expecting to find a message there from her husband. And there was the message—just arrived. The dean had reached Florence three days after her departure; and as he would do the journey home in twenty-four hours less than she had taken, he would be there, at the hotel, on the day after to-morrow. "I suppose I may wait for him, Mr. Eames?" said Mrs. Arabin.

"I will see Mr. Toogood to-night, and I will call here to-morrow, whether I see him or not. At what hour will you be in?"

"Don't trouble yourself to do that. You must take care of Sir Raffle Buffle, you know."

"I shan't go near Sir Raffle Buffle to-morrow, nor yet the next day. You mustn't suppose that I am afraid of Sir Raffle Buffle."

"You are only afraid of Lily Dale." From all which it may be seen that Mrs. Arabin and John Eames had become very intimate on their way home.

It was then arranged that he should call on Mr. Toogood that same night or early the next morning, and that he should come to the hotel at twelve o'clock on the next day. Going along one of the passages he passed two gentlemen in shovel-hats, with very black new coats, and knee-breeches; and Johnny could not but hear a few words which one clerical gentleman said to the other. "She was a woman of great energy, of wonderful spirit, but a firebrand, my lord,—a complete firebrand!" Then Johnny knew that the Dean of A. was talking to the Bishop of B. about the late Mrs. Proudie.

CHAPTER LXXI.

MR. TOOGOOD AT SILVERBRIDGE.

We will now go back to Mr. Toogood as he started for Silverbridge, on the receipt of Mrs. Arabin's telegram from Venice. "I gave cheque to Mr. Crawley. It was part of a sum of money. Will write to Archdeacon Grantly to-day, and return home at once." That was the telegram which Mr. Toogood received at his office, and on receiving which he resolved that he must start to Barchester immediately. "It isn't certainly what you may call a paying business," he said to his partner, who continued to grumble; "but it must be done all the same. If it don't get into the ledger in one way it will in another." So Mr. Toogood started for Silverbridge, having sent to his house in Tavistock Square for a small bag, a clean shirt, and a toothbrush. And as he went down in the railway-carriage, before he went to sleep, he turned it all over in his mind. "Poor devil! I wonder whether any man ever suffered so much before. And as for that woman,—it's ten thousand pities that she should have died before she heard it. Talk of heart-complaint; she'd have had a touch of heart-complaint if she had known this!" Then, as he was speculating how Mrs. Arabin could have become possessed of the cheque, he went to sleep.

He made up his mind that the first person to be seen was Mr. Walker, and after that he would, if possible, go to Archdeacon Grantly. He was at first minded to go at once out to Hogglestock; but when he remembered how very strange Mr. Crawley was in all his ways, and told himself professionally that telegrams were but bad sources of evidence on which to depend for details, he thought that it would be safer if he were first to see Mr. Walker. There would be very little delay. In a day or two the archdeacon would receive his letter, and in a day or two after that Mrs. Arabin would probably be at home.

It was late in the evening before Mr. Toogood reached the house of the Silverbridge solicitor, having the telegram carefully folded in his pocket; and he was shown into the dining-room while the servant took his name up to Mr. Walker. The clerks were gone, and the office was closed; and persons coming on business at such times,—as they often did come to that house,—were always shown into the parlour.

"I don't know whether master can see you to-night," said the girl; "but if he can, he'll come down."

When the card was brought up to Mr. Walker he was sitting alone with his wife. "It's Toogood," said he; "poor Crawley's cousin."

"I wonder whether he has found anything out," said Mrs. Walker. "May he not come up here?" Then Mr. Toogood was summoned into the drawing-room, to the maid's astonishment; for Mr. Toogood had made no toilet sacrifices to the goddess or grace who presides over evening society in provincial towns,—and presented himself with the telegram in his hand. "We have found out all about poor Crawley's cheque," he said, before the maid-servant had closed the door. "Look at that," and he handed the telegram to Mr. Walker. The poor girl was obliged to go, though she would have given one of her ears to know the exact contents of that bit of paper.

"Walker, what is it?" said his wife, before Walker had had time to make the contents of the document his own.

"He got it from Mrs. Arabin," said Toogood.

"No!" said Mrs. Walker. "I thought that was it all along."

"It's a pity you didn't say so before," said Mr. Walker.

"So I did; but a lawyer thinks that nobody can ever see anything but himself;—begging your pardon, Mr. Toogood, but I forgot you were one of us. But, Walker, do read it." Then the telegram was read. "I gave cheque to Mr. Crawley. It was part of a sum of money,"—with the rest of it. "I knew it would come out," said Mrs. Walker. "I was quite sure of it."

"But why the mischief didn't he say so?" said Walker.

"He did say that he got it from the dean," said Toogood.

"But he didn't get it from the dean; and the dean clearly knew nothing about it."

"I'll tell you what it is," said Mrs. Walker; "it has been some private transaction between Mr. Crawley and Mrs. Arabin, which the dean was to know nothing about; and so he wouldn't tell. I must say I honour him."

"I don't think it has been that," said Walker. "Had he known all through that it had come from Mrs. Arabin, he would never have said that Mr. Soames gave it to him, and then that the dean gave it him."

"The truth has been that he has known nothing about it," said Toogood; "and we shall have to tell him."

At that moment Mary Walker came into the room, and Mrs. Walker could not constrain herself. "Mary, Mr. Crawley is all right. He didn't steal the cheque. Mrs. Arabin gave it to him."

"Who says so? How do you know? Oh, dear; I am so happy, if it's true." Then she saw Mr. Toogood, and curtseyed.

"It is quite true, my dear," said Mr. Walker. "Mr. Toogood has had a message by the wires from Mrs. Arabin at Venice. She is coming home at once, and no doubt everything will be put right. In the meantime, it may be a question whether we should not hold our tongues. Mr. Crawley himself, I suppose, knows nothing of it yet?"

"Not a word," said Toogood.

"Papa, I must tell Miss Prettyman," said Mary.

"I should think that probably all Silverbridge knows it by this time," said Mrs. Walker, "because Jane was in the room when the announcement was made. You may be sure that every servant in the house has been told." Mary Walker, not waiting for any further command from her father, hurried out of the room to convey the secret to her special circle of friends.

It was known throughout Silverbridge that night, and indeed it made so much commotion that it kept many people for an hour out of their beds. Ladies who were not in the habit of going out late at night without the fly from the "George and Vulture," tied their heads up in their handkerchiefs, and hurried up and down the street to tell each other that the great secret had been discovered, and that in truth Mr. Crawley had not stolen the cheque. The solution of the mystery was not known to all,—was known on that night only to the very select portion of the aristocracy of Silverbridge to whom it was communicated by Mary Walker or Miss Anne Prettyman. For Mary Walker, when earnestly entreated by Jane, the parlour-maid, to tell her something more of the great news, had so far respected her father's caution as to say not a word about Mrs. Arabin. "Is it true, Miss Mary, that he didn't steal it?" Jane asked imploringly. "It is true. He did not steal it." "And who did, Miss Mary? Indeed I won't tell anybody." "Nobody. But don't ask any more questions, for I won't answer them. Get me my hat at once, for I want to go up to Miss Prettyman's." Then Jane got Miss Walker's hat, and immediately afterwards scampered into the kitchen with the news. "Oh, law, cook, it's all come out! Mr. Crawley's as innocent as the unborn babe. The gentleman upstairs what's just come, and was here once before,—for I know'd him immediate,—I heard him say so. And master said so too."

"Did master say so his own self?" asked the cook.

"Indeed he did; and Miss Mary told me the same this moment."

"If master said so, then there ain't a doubt as they'll find him innocent. And who took'd it, Jane?"

"Miss Mary says as nobody didn't steal it."

"That's nonsense, Jane. It stands to reason as somebody had it as hadn't ought to have had it. But I'm as glad as anything as how that poor reverend gent 'll come off;—I am. They tells me it's weeks sometimes before a bit of butcher's meat finds its way into his house." Then the groom and the housemaid and the cook, one after another, took occasion to slip out of the back-door, and poor Jane, who had really been the owner of the news, was left alone to answer the bell.

Miss Walker found the two Miss Prettymans sitting together over their accounts in the elder Miss Prettyman's private room. And she could see at once by signs which were not unfamiliar to her that Miss Anne Prettyman was being scolded. It often happened that Miss Anne Prettyman was scolded, especially when the accounts were brought out upon the table. "Sister, they are illegible," Mary Walker heard, as the servant opened the door for her.

"I don't think it's quite so bad as that," said Miss Anne, unable to restrain her defence. Then, as Mary entered the room, Miss Prettyman the elder laid her hands down on certain books and papers as though to hide them from profane eyes.

"I am glad to see you, Mary," said Miss Prettyman, gravely.

"I've brought such a piece of news," said Mary. "I knew you'd be glad to hear it, so I ventured to disturb you."

"Is it good news?" said Anne Prettyman.

"Very good news. Mr. Crawley is innocent.

Both the ladies sprung on to their legs. Even Miss Prettyman herself jumped up on to her legs. "No!" said Anne. "Your father has discovered it?" said Miss Prettyman.

"Not exactly that. Mr. Toogood has come down from London to tell him. Mr. Toogood, you know, is Mr. Crawley's cousin; and he is a lawyer, like papa." It may be observed that ladies belonging to the families of solicitors always talk about lawyers, and never about attorneys or barristers.

"And does Mr. Toogood say that Mr. Crawley is innocent?" asked Miss Prettyman.

"He has heard it by a message from Mrs. Arabin. But you mustn't mention this. You won't, please, because papa has asked me not. I told him that I should tell you." Then, for the first time, the frown passed away entirely from Miss Prettyman's face, and the papers and account-books were pushed aside, as being of no moment. The news had been momentous enough to satisfy her. Mary continued her story almost in a whisper. "It was Mrs. Arabin who sent the cheque to Mr. Crawley. She says so herself. So that makes Mr. Crawley quite innocent. I am so glad."

"But isn't it odd he didn't say so?" said Miss Prettyman.

"Nevertheless, it's true," said Mary.

"Perhaps he forgot," said Anne Prettyman.

"Men don't forget such things as that," said the elder sister.

"I really do think Mr. Crawley could forget anything," said the younger sister.

"You may be sure it's true," said Mary Walker, "because papa said so."

"If he said so, it must be true," said Miss Prettyman; "and I am rejoiced. I really am rejoiced. Poor man! Poor ill-used man! And nobody has ever believed that he has really been guilty, even though they may have thought that he spent the money without any proper right to it. And now he will get off. But dear me, Mary, Mr. Smithe told me yesterday that he had already given up his living, and that Mr. Spooner, the minor canon, was trying to get it from the dean. But that was because Mr. Spooner and Mrs. Proudie had quarrelled; and as Mrs. Proudie is gone, Mr. Spooner very likely won't want to move now."

"They'll never go and put anybody into Hogglestock, Annabella, over Mr. Crawley's head," said Anne.

"I didn't say that they would. Surely I may be allowed to repeat what I hear, like another person, without being snapped up."

"I didn't mean to snap you up, Annabella."

"You're always snapping me up. But if this is true, I cannot say how glad I am. My poor Grace! Now, I suppose, there will be no difficulty, and Grace will become a great lady." Then they discussed very minutely the chances of Grace Crawley's promotion.

John Walker, Mr. Winthrop, and several others of the chosen spirits of Silverbridge, were playing whist at a provincial club, which had established itself in the town, when the news was brought to them. Though Mr. Winthrop was the partner of the great Walker, and though John Walker was the great man's son, I fear that the news reached their ears in but an underhand sort of way. As for the great man himself, he never went near the club, preferring his slippers and tea at home. The Walkerian groom, rushing up the street to the "George and Vulture," paused a moment to tell his tidings to the club porter; from the club porter it was whispered respectfully to the Silverbridge apothecary, who, by special grace, was a member of the club;—and was by him repeated with much cautious solemnity over the card-table. "Who told you that, Balsam?" said John Walker, throwing down his cards.

"I've just heard it," said Balsam.

"I don't believe it," said John.

"I shouldn't wonder if it's true," said Winthrop. "I always said that something would turn up."

"Will you bet three to one he is not found guilty?" said John Walker.

"Done," said Winthrop; "in pounds." That morning the odds in the club against the event had been only two to one. But as the matter was discussed, the men in the club began to believe the tidings, and before he went home, John Walker would have been glad to hedge his bet on any terms. After he had spoken to his father, he gave his money up for lost.

But Mr. Walker,—the great Walker,—had more to do that night before his son came home from the club. He and Mr. Toogood agreed that it would be right that they should see Dr. Tempest at once, and they went over together to the rectory. It was past ten at this time, and they found the doctor almost in the act of putting out the candles for the night. "I could not but come to you, doctor," said Mr. Walker, "with the news my friend has brought. Mrs. Arabin gave the cheque to Crawley. Here is a telegram from her saying so." And the telegram was handed to the doctor.

He stood perfectly silent for a few minutes, reading it over and over again. "I see it all," he said, when he spoke at last. "I see it all now; and I must own I was never before so much puzzled in my life."

"I own I can't see why she should have given him Mr. Soames's cheque," said Mr. Walker.

"I can't say where she got it, and I own I don't much care," said Dr. Tempest. "But I don't doubt but what she gave it him without telling the dean, and that Crawley thought it came from the dean. I'm very glad. I am, indeed, very glad. I do not know that I ever pitied a man so much in my life as I have pitied Mr. Crawley."

"It must have been a hard case when it has moved him," said Mr. Walker to Mr. Toogood as they left the clergyman's house; and then the Silverbridge attorney saw the attorney from London home to his inn.

It was the general opinion at Silverbridge that the news from Venice ought to be communicated to the Crawleys by Major Grantly. Mary Walker had expressed this opinion very strongly, and her mother had agreed with her. Miss Prettyman also felt that poetical justice, or, at least, the romance of justice, demanded this; and, as she told her sister Anne after Mary Walker left her, she was of opinion that such an arrangement might tend to make things safe. "I do think he is an honest man and a fine fellow," said Miss Prettyman; "but, my

dear, you know what the proverb says, 'There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.'" Miss Prettyman thought that anything which might be done to prevent a slip ought to be done. The idea that the pleasant task of taking the news out to Hogglestock ought to be confided to Major Grantly was very general; but then Mr. Walker was of opinion that the news ought not to be taken to Hogglestock at all till something more certain than the telegram had reached them. Early on the following morning the two lawyers again met, and it was arranged between them that the London lawyer should go over at once to Barchester, and that the Silverbridge lawyer should see Major Grantly. Mr. Toogood was still of opinion that with due diligence something might yet be learned as to the cheque, by inquiry among the denizens of "The Dragon of Wantly;" and his opinion to this effect was stronger than ever when he learned from Mr. Walker that "The Dragon of Wantly" belonged to Mrs. Arabin.

Mr. Walker, after breakfast, had himself driven up in his open carriage to Cosby Lodge, and, as he entered the gates, observed that the auctioneer's bills as to the sale had been pulled down. The Mr. Walkers of the world know everything, and our Mr. Walker had quite understood that the major was leaving Cosby Lodge because of some misunderstanding with his father. The exact nature of the misunderstanding he did not know, even though he was Mr. Walker, but had little doubt that it referred in some way to Grace Crawley. If the archdeacon's objection to Grace arose from the imputation against the father, that objection would now be removed, but the abolition of the posters could not as yet have been owing to any such cause as that. Mr. Walker found the major at the gate of the farmyard attached to Cosby Lodge, and perceived that at that very moment he was engaged in superintending the abolition of sundry other auctioneer's bills from sundry other posts. "What is all this about?" said Mr. Walker, greeting the major. "Is there to be no sale after all?"

"It has been postponed," said the major.

"Postponed for good, I hope? Bill to be read again this day six months!" said Mr. Walker.

"I rather think not. But circumstances have induced me to have it put off."

Mr. Walker had got out of the carriage and had taken Major Grantly aside. "Just come a little further," he said; "I've something special to tell you. News reached me last night which will clear Mr. Crawley altogether. We know now where he got the cheque."

"You don't tell me so!"

"Yes, I do. And though the news has reached us in such a way that we cannot act upon it till it's confirmed, I do not in the least doubt it."

"And how did he get it?"

"You cannot guess?"

"Not in the least," said the major; "unless, after all, Soames gave it to him."

"Soames did not give it to him, but Mrs. Arabin did."

"Mrs. Arabin?"

"Yes, Mrs. Arabin."

"Not the dean?"

"No, not the dean. What we know is this, that your aunt has telegraphed to Crawley's cousin, Toogood, to say that she gave Crawley that cheque, and that she has written to your father about it at length. We do not like to tell Crawley till that letter has been received. It is so easy, you know, to misunderstand a telegram, and the wrong copying of a word may make such a mistake!"

"When was it received?"

"Toogood received it in London only yesterday morning. Your father will not get his letter, as I calculate, till the day after to-morrow. But, perhaps, you had better go over and see him, and prepare him for it. Toogood has gone to Barchester this morning." To this proposition Grantly made no immediate answer. He could not but remember the terms on which he had left his father; and though he had, most unwillingly, pulled down the auctioneer's bills, in compliance with his mother's last prayer to him,—and, indeed, had angrily told the auctioneer to send him in his bill when the auctioneer had demurred to these proceedings,—nevertheless he was hardly prepared to discuss the matter of Mr. Crawley with his father in pleasant words,—in words which should be full of rejoicing. It was a great thing for him, Henry Grantly, that Mr. Crawley should be innocent, and he did rejoice; but he had intended his father to understand that he meant to persevere, whether Mr. Crawley were innocent or guilty, and thus he would now lose an opportunity for exhibiting his obstinacy,—an opportunity which had not been without a charm for him. He must console himself as best he might with the returning prospect of assured prosperity, and with his renewed hopes as to the Plumstead foxes! "We think, major, that when the time comes you ought to be the bearer of the news to Hogglestock," said Mr. Walker. Then the major did undertake to convey the news to Hogglestock, but he made no promise as to going over to Plumstead.

CHAPTER LXXII.

MR. TOOGOOD AT "THE DRAGON OF WANTLY."

In accordance with his arrangement with Mr. Walker, Mr. Toogood went over to Barchester early in the morning and put himself up at "The Dragon of Wantly." He now knew the following facts: that Mr. Soames, when he lost his cheque, had had with him one of the servants from that inn,—that the man who had been with Mr. Soames had gone to New Zealand,—that the cheque had found its way into the hands of Mrs. Arabin, and that Mrs. Arabin was the owner of the inn in question. So much he believed to be within his knowledge, and if his knowledge should prove to be correct, his work would be done as far as Mr. Crawley was concerned. If Mr. Crawley had not stolen the cheque, and if that could be proved, it would be a question of no great moment to Mr. Toogood who had stolen it. But he was a sportsman in his own line who liked to account for his own fox. As he was down at Barchester, he thought that he might as well learn how the cheque had got into Mrs. Arabin's hands. No doubt that for her own personal possession of it she would be able to account on her return. Probably such account would be given in her first letter home. But it might be well that he should be prepared with any small circumstantial details which he might be able to pick up at the inn.

He reached Barchester before breakfast, and in ordering his tea and toast, reminded the old waiter with the dirty towel of his former acquaintance with him. "I remember you, sir," said the old waiter. "I remember you very well. You was asking questions about the cheque which Mr. Soames lost afore Christmas." Mr. Toogood certainly had asked one question on the subject. He had inquired whether a certain man who had gone to New Zealand had been the post-boy who accompanied Mr. Soames when the cheque was lost; and the waiter had professed to know nothing about Mr. Soames or the cheque. He now perceived at once that the gist of the question had remained on the old man's mind, and that he was recognized as being in some way connected with the lost money.

"Did I? Ah, yes; I think I did. And I think you told me that he was the man?"

"No, sir; I never told you that."

"Then you told me that he wasn't."

"Nor I didn't tell you that neither," said the waiter angrily.

"Then what the devil did you tell me?" To this further question the waiter sulkily declined to give any answer, and soon afterwards left the room. Toogood, as soon as he had done his breakfast, rang the bell, and the same man appeared. "Will you tell Mr. Stringer that I should be glad to see him if he's disengaged," said Mr. Toogood. "I know he's bad with the gout, and therefore if he'll allow me, I'll go to him instead of his coming to me." Mr. Stringer was the landlord of the inn. The waiter hesitated a moment, and then declared that to the best of his belief his master was not down. He would go and see. Toogood, however, would not wait for that; but rising quickly and passing the waiter, crossed the hall from the coffee-room, and entered what was called the bar. The bar was a small room connected with the hall by a large open window, at which orders for rooms were given and cash was paid, and glasses of beer were consumed,—and a good deal of miscellaneous conversation was carried on. The barmaid was here at the window, and there was also, in a corner of the room, a man at a desk with a red nose. Toogood knew that the man at the desk with the red nose was Mr. Stringer's clerk. So much he had learned in his former rummaging about the inn. And he also remembered at this moment that he had observed the man with the red nose standing under a narrow archway in the close as he was coming out of the deanery, on the occasion of his visit to Mr. Harding. It had not occurred to him then that the man with the red nose was watching him, but it did occur to him now that the man with the red nose had been there, under the arch, with the express purpose of watching him on that occasion. Mr. Toogood passed quickly through the bar into an inner parlour, in which was sitting Mr. Stringer, the landlord, propped among his cushions. Toogood, as he had entered the hotel, had seen Mr. Stringer so placed, through the two doors, which at that moment had both happened to be open. He knew therefore that his old friend the waiter had not been quite true to him in suggesting that his master was not as yet down. As Toogood cast a glance of his eye on the man with the red nose, he told himself the old story of the apparition under the archway.

"Mr. Stringer," said Mr. Toogood to the landlord, "I hope I'm not intruding."

"O dear, no, sir," said the forlorn man. "Nobody ever intrudes coming in here. I'm always happy to see gentlemen,—only, mostly, I'm so bad with the gout."

"Have you got a sharp touch of it just now, Mr. Stringer?"

"Not just to-day, sir. I've been a little easier since Saturday. The worst of this burst is over. But Lord bless you, sir, it don't leave me,—not for a fortnight at a time, now; it don't. And it ain't what I drink, nor it ain't what I eat."

"Constitutional, I suppose?" said Toogood.

"Look here, sir;" and Mr. Stringer shewed his visitor the chalk stones in all his knuckles. "They say I'm all a mass of chalk. I sometimes think they'll break me up to mark the scores behind my own door with." And Mr. Stringer laughed at his own wit.

Mr. Toogood laughed too. He laughed loud and cheerily. And then he asked a sudden question, keeping his eye as he did so upon a little square open window, which communicated between the landlord's private room and the bar. Through this small aperture he could see as he stood a portion of the hat worn by the man with the red nose. Since he had been in the room with the landlord, the man with the red nose had moved his head twice, on each occasion drawing himself closer into his corner; but Mr. Toogood, by moving also, had still contrived to keep a morsel of the hat in sight. He laughed cheerily at the landlord's joke, and then he asked a sudden question,—looking well at the morsel of the hat as he did so. "Mr. Stringer," said he, "how do you pay your rent, and to whom do you pay it?" There was immediately a jerk in the hat, and then it disappeared. Toogood, stepping to the open door, saw that the red-nosed clerk had taken his hat off and was very busy at his accounts.

"How do I pay my rent?" said Mr. Stringer, the landlord. "Well, sir, since this cursed gout has been so bad, it's hard enough to pay it at all sometimes. You ain't sent here to look for it, sir, are you?"

"Not I," said Toogood. "It was only a chance question." He felt that he had nothing more to do with Mr. Stringer, the landlord. Mr. Stringer, the landlord, knew nothing about Mr. Soames's cheque. "What's the name of your clerk?" said he.

"The name of my clerk?" said Mr. Stringer. "Why do you want to know the name of my clerk?"

"Does he ever pay your rent for you?"

"Well, yes; he does, at times. He pays it into the bank for the lady as owns the house. Is there any reason for your asking these questions, sir? It isn't usual, you know, for a stranger, sir."

Toogood during the whole of this time was standing with his eye upon the red-nosed man, and the red-nosed man could not move. The

red-nosed man heard all the questions and the landlord's answers, and could not even pretend that he did not hear them. "I am my cousin's clerk," said he, putting on his hat, and coming up to Mr. Toogood with a swagger. "My name is Dan Stringer, and I'm Mr. John Stringer's cousin. I've lived with Mr. John Stringer for twelve year and more, and I'm a'most as well known in Barchester as himself. Have you anything to say to me, sir?"

"Well, yes; I have," said Toogood.

"I believe you're one of them attorneys from London?" said Mr. Dan Stringer.

"That's true. I am an attorney from London."

"I hope there's nothing wrong?" said the gouty man, trying to get off his chair, but not succeeding. "If there is anything wronger than usual, Dan, do tell me. Is there anything wrong, sir?" and the landlord appealed piteously to Mr. Toogood.

"Never you mind, John," said Dan. "You keep yourself quiet, and don't answer none of his questions. He's one of them low sort, he is. I know him. I knowed him for what he is directly I saw him. Ferreting about,—that's his game; to see if there's anything to be got."

"But what is he ferreting here for?" said Mr. John Stringer.

"I'm ferreting for Mr. Soames's cheque for twenty pounds," said Mr. Toogood.

"That's the cheque that the parson stole," said Dan Stringer. "He's to be tried for it at the 'sizes."

"You've heard about Mr. Soames and his cheque, and about Mr. Crawley, I daresay?" said Toogood.

"I've heard a deal about them," said the landlord.

"And so, I daresay, have you?" said Toogood, turning to Dan Stringer. But Dan Stringer did not seem inclined to carry on the conversation any further. When he was hardly pressed, he declared that he just had heard that there was some parson in trouble about a sum of money; but that he knew no more about it than that. He didn't know whether it was a cheque or a note that the parson had taken, and had never been sufficiently interested in the matter to make any inquiry.

"But you've just said that Mr. Soames's cheque was the cheque the parson stole," said the astonished landlord, turning with open eyes upon his cousin.

"You be blowed," said Dan Stringer, the clerk, to Mr. John Stringer, the landlord; and then walked out of the room back to the bar.

"I understand nothing about it,—nothing at all," said the gout man.

"I understand pretty nearly all about it," said Mr. Toogood, following the red-nosed clerk. There was no necessity that he should trouble the landlord any further. He left the room, and went through the bar, and as he passed out along the hall, he found Dan Stringer with his hat on talking to the waiter. The waiter immediately pulled himself up, and adjusted his dirty napkin under his arm, after the fashion of waiters, and showed that he intended to be civil to the customers of the house. But he of the red nose cocked his hat, and looked with insolence at Mr. Toogood, and defied him. "There's nothing I do hate so much as them low-bred Old Bailey attorneys," said Mr. Dan Stringer to the waiter, in a voice intended to reach Mr. Toogood's ears. Then Mr. Toogood told himself that Dan Stringer was not the thief himself, and that it might be very difficult to prove that Dan had even been the receiver of stolen goods. He had, however, no doubt in his own mind but that such was the case.

He first went to the police office, and there explained his business. Nobody at the police office pretended to forget Mr. Soames's cheque, or Mr. Crawley's position. The constable went so far as to swear that there wasn't a man, woman, or child in all Barchester who was not talking of Mr. Crawley at that very moment. Then Mr. Toogood went with the constable to the private house of the mayor, and had a little conversation with the mayor. "Not guilty!" said the mayor, with incredulity, when he first heard the news about Crawley. But when he heard Mr. Toogood's story, or as much of it as it was necessary that he should hear, he yielded reluctantly. "Dear, dear!" he said. "I'd have bet anything 'twas he who stole it." And after that the mayor was quite sad. Only let us think what a comfortable excitement it would create throughout England if it was surmised that an archbishop had forged a deed; and how much England would lose when it was discovered that the archbishop was innocent! As the archbishop and his forgery would be to England, so was Mr. Crawley and the cheque for twenty pounds to Barchester and its mayor. Nevertheless, the mayor promised his assistance to Mr. Toogood.

Mr. Toogood, still neglecting his red-nosed friend, went next to the deanery, hoping that he might again see Mr. Harding. Mr. Harding was, he was told, too ill to be seen. Mr. Harding, Mrs. Baxter said, could never be seen now by strangers, nor yet by friends, unless they were very old friends. "There's been a deal of change since you were here last, sir. I remember your coming, sir. You were talking to

Mr. Harding about the poor clergyman as is to be tried." He did not stop to tell Mrs. Baxter the whole story of Mr. Crawley's innocence; but having learned that a message had been received to say that Mrs. Arabin would be home on the next Tuesday,—this being Friday,—he took his leave of Mrs. Baxter. His next visit was to Mr. Soames, who lived three miles out in the country.

He found it very difficult to convince Mr. Soames. Mr. Soames was more staunch in his belief of Mr. Crawley's guilt than any one whom Toogood had yet encountered. "I never took the cheque out of his house," said Mr. Soames. "But you have not stated that on oath," said Mr. Toogood. "No," rejoined the other; "and I never will. I can't swear to it; but yet I'm sure of it." He acknowledged that he had been driven by a man named Scuttle, and that Scuttle might have picked up the cheque, if it had been dropped in the gig. But the cheque had not been dropped in the gig. The cheque had been dropped in Mr. Crawley's house. "Why did he say then that I paid it to him?" said Mr. Soames, when Mr. Toogood spoke confidently of Crawley's innocence. "Ah, why indeed?" answered Toogood. "If he had not been fool enough to do that, we should have been saved all this trouble. All the same, he did not steal your money, Mr. Soames; and Jem Scuttle did steal it. Unfortunately, Jem Scuttle is in New Zealand by this time." "Of course, it is possible," said Mr. Soames, as he bowed Mr. Toogood out. Mr. Soames did not like Mr. Toogood.

That evening a gentleman with a red nose asked at the Barchester station for a second-class ticket for London by the up night-mail train. He was well known at the station, and the station-master made some little inquiry. "All the way to London to-night, Mr. Stringer?" he said.

"Yes,—all the way," said the red-nosed man, sulkily.

"I don't think you'd better go to London to-night, Mr. Stringer," said a tall man, stepping out of the door of the booking-office. "I think you'd better come back with me to Barchester. I do indeed." There was some little argument on the occasion; but the stranger, who was a detective policeman, carried his point, and Mr. Dan Stringer did return to Barchester.

ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN!!

EVERYONE SHOULD THEREFORE PROVIDE AGAINST THEM!

£1,000 IN CASE OF DEATH,

Or £6 per Week while laid-up by Injury.

CAUSED BY

ACCIDENT OF ANY KIND,

(RIDING, DRIVING, HUNTING, SHOOTING, FISHING, ETC.),

MAY BE SECURED

BY AN ANNUAL PAYMENT OF FROM £3 to £6 5s.

TO THE

RAILWAY PASSENGERS ASSURANCE COMPANY.

OFFICES:

64, CORNHILL, & 10, REGENT STREET, LONDON.

The oldest established and largest company in the World insuring against

ACCIDENTS OF EVERY DESCRIPTION.

For particulars apply to the Clerks at any of the Railway Stations, to the Local Agents, or at the Head Office,

64, CORNHILL, LONDON, E.C.

WILLIAM J. VIAN, Secretary.

RAILWAY PASSENGERS ASSURANCE COMPANY,

Empowered by Special Acts of Parliament, 1849 & 1864.